

Written by Mike Honda  
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Today I re-introduced legislation in Congress to overhaul the country's education system and finally address the disparities in America's schools. My Educational Opportunity and Equity Commission Act attends to the President's concern regarding, in Obama's words, the "relative decline of American education," which is "untenable for our economy, unsustainable for our democracy, and unacceptable for our children."

Despite our best efforts, our children are not receiving an equitable education. There are vast disparities between the education provided by schools in different school districts, counties and states. Our current funding formulas are outdated, relying on factors such as average daily attendance, average costs for "regular" students, percentage of low-income students and concentrations of low-income students, special education students and English language learners. Funding formulas are based on a number of factors not necessarily correlated to the individual needs of the children in the school, and they vary from state to state.

The Educational Opportunity and Equity Commission Act creates a national commission charged with gathering public opinions and insights about how government can improve education and eliminate disparities in the education system. Importantly, the Commission's composition would change the nature of the debate. Comprised of parents, teachers and experts on equity, civil rights, education policy, school finance, economics, and taxation — not merely state and federal legislators — the reform road map would be written by all users and beneficiaries of America's education system.

This is a national problem demanding a national conversation. If fostered effectively, I believe that this dialogue can have a direct and positive impact on our nation's economy and capacity to lead in the 21st century.

The bill has not yet been posted on Thomas, but you can view the [bill text](#) on my website and read what leading [education organizations](#) have said about the bill.